## LISTING OF CLAIMS

1.  (Currently amended)  A method of fulfilling an information need comprising:

    receiving a query comprised of one or more fully specified terms and one or more at least partially unspecified terms; ~~and~~

    determining one or more matches for the query, wherein a criterion for determining one of said matches specifies that a relative order of at least one term of said query need not be preserved with respect to at least one other term included in said query; and

    displaying the one or more matches.

2.  (Previously presented)  The method of claim 1, further comprising:

    identifying documents in an index that contain the one or more at least partially unspecified terms, the index including preanalyzed contexts of terms appearing within a plurality of documents.

3.  (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises:

    identifying contexts within an index that in accordance with the query, the index including preanalyzed contexts of terms appearing within a plurality of documents;

    converting the query into a finite state machine; and

    matching the finite state machine against the identified contexts.

4.  (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the finite state machine is a finite state transducer.

5.  (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the finite state machine allows for the appearance of fully specified and at least partially unspecified terms in any order in a potential matching context.

6. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the finite state machine allows for one or more intervening words between the fully specified and at least partially unspecified terms in a potential matching context.

7-15 (Canceled)

16. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 3 , wherein the contexts are stored as finite state machines.

17. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 3 , wherein the documents are accessible over the Internet.

18. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 3 , wherein the documents comprise World Wide Web pages.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

assigning a score to a match.

21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the score reflects the number of times an instance of the match is located among a plurality of documents.

22.-24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 23, further comprising:

ranking the documents that contain a match based on a number of times the match is located within a document.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said one or more partially unspecified terms includes a syntactic or a morphological restriction.

28.- 33. (Canceled)

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2 , wherein the index comprises locations of terms within documents.

35. (Previously presented The method of claim 34, further comprising:

determining the location of a term in the query within a document using the index; and

locating a match for the query based on the location of the term within the document.

36.    (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

ranking a plurality of the located matches or portions thereof.

37.-38. (Canceled)

39.    (Original) The method of claim 36, wherein the ranking is based on one or more features selected from the list consisting of: the location of a match within a document, a weight assigned to a document that contains a match, the age of a document that contains a match, the source of a document that contains a match, and a format feature of a match within a document.

40. - 63.    (Canceled)

64. (Previously presented)  The method of Claim 1, wherein said query includes a delimiter indicating a first portion of said query for which a relative order is preserved for one or more terms included in said first portion, said relative order being in accordance with a physical position of each term in said first portion with respect to any other terms in said first portion.


65. (Previously presented)  The method of Claim 1, wherein one of said at least partially unspecified terms includes a predefined character sequence representing a matching restriction that defines at least one of: a syntactical criteria, a morphological criteria, and a criteria defined in accordance with a determination by a computer program, and said one or more matches for the query are determined in accordance with said matching restriction.


66.    (Currently amended)  A computer program product for fulfilling an information need comprising code that:

receives a query comprised of one or more fully specified terms and one or more at least partially unspecified terms; ~~and~~

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determines one or more matches for the query, wherein a criterion for determining one of said matches specifies that a relative order of at least one term of said query need not be preserved with respect to at least one other term included in said query

determines one or more matches for the query, wherein a criterion for determining one of said matches specifies that a relative order of at least one term of said query need not be preserved with respect to at least one other term included in said query; and

causes the one or more matches to be displayed.

67. (Previously presented)   The computer program product of Claim 66, wherein said query includes a delimiter indicating a first portion of said query for which a relative order is preserved for one or more terms included in said first portion, said relative order being in accordance with a physical position of each term in said first portion with respect to any other terms in said first portion.

68. (Previously presented)  The computer program product of Claim 66, wherein said one or more partially unspecified terms includes a syntactic or morphological restriction.